THE ART OF ROSSO FIORENTINO TO OPEN AT NATIONAL GALLERY

First U.S. Exhibition Ever Devoted Solely to 16th-Century Italian Renaissance Artist

October 1, 1987 - The first exhibition in the United States ever devoted solely to the works and designs of 16th-century Italian Renaissance artist Rosso Fiorentino opens Oct. 25 at the National Gallery of Art's West Building. Rosso Fiorentino Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts consists of 117 objects, including 28 drawings by Rosso, 80 prints after his compositions, majolica and enamel platters, and tapestries made from his designs. On view through Jan. 3, 1988, the exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Giovanni Battista di Jacopo (1494-1540), best known as Rosso Fiorentino, worked in Florence from 1513 until 1524, when he went to Rome. He left the city during the infamous Sack of Rome in 1527, wandering about Italy until 1530, when he went to France to work for King Francis I at Fontainebleau. Rosso began his career with a style modeled on the art of the Florentine Renaissance, but he is now seen as one of the founders of the anticlassical style called Mannerism. An intense and eccentric individual, Rosso was internationally famous in the 16th century while today he is most readily recognized for his work at Fontainebleau and for the great impact of his Italian style on French art.

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"Never before have so many of Rosso's drawings been assembled for one exhibition," said J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery. "This exhibition provides a unique opportunity to see together many of Rosso's drawings, as well as a significant number of his great compositions translated as etchings, engravings, ceramics and tapestries."

Among the works in the exhibition are Pluto in a Niche, a drawing by Rosso made for the series of Gods in Niches engraved by Gian Jacopo Caraglio in Rome in 1526, Pandora and Her Box, a drawing done in France around 1536, and Empedocles - Saint Roch, a drawing of around 1540. Two tapestries, now in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and never before exhibited in the United States, have undergone special conservation for the exhibition. Also on view will be several majolica and enamel plates with compositions by Rosso, such as Hercules Killing the Hydra (1535) from his series depicting the labors of Hercules.

Dr. Eugene A. Carroll of Vassar College, a leading authority on Rosso, is the guest curator and author of the catalogue accompanying the exhibition. "This is an enormously exciting exhibition," said Dr. Carroll. "The opportunity to study the artist's drawings, as well as prints made after lost drawings, is truly unparalleled. We will be able to see and understand the entire span of Rosso's work, during his early great Italian period as well as the years 1530-1540 when he was at the French court at Fontainebleau."

H. Diane Russell, curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery, is the coordinating curator of the exhibition. Rosso Fiorentino Drawings, Prints and Decorative Arts will be seen only in Washington and closes Jan. 3, 1988. A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.
In 1526 Rosso Fiorentino wrote to Michelangelo, who was then at the height of his fame as the foremost painter in Italy, to defend himself from accusations and rumors that he had spoken disparagingly of Michelangelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. A shortened version of the letter follows:

To the magnificent Michelangelo Buonarroti, happiness.

Though I have thought of writing to you for a long while, I feared that I may simply be burdening you more than anything else, and thus I kept putting it off. I beg you to forgive me, and ascribe everything to my sincere affection, and to my fear of losing what I do not deserve to lose: that is your favor, which to me is dearer than all else.

As you know, there are many people who, when they can't stick their heads into something, find some way to stick their tails in; there are a few people here who have tried with all their strength to do with me that which their evil natures do with others. But by the grace of God I discovered part of their ugly doings. Since these things touch upon my honor, I could not let them pass without perturbation. Nevertheless, because I believed in the high truth, I tolerated them patiently, especially since I had heard in several letters that you, in your grace and goodness, defended me several times. But those corrupt people so eager to do evil, seeing that they could not hurt me as they had wished, have tried a new way. So that, although I have confidence in the integrity and wisdom of your judgement, and in my own innocence, I nevertheless decided to break my silence, for this thing touches me to the quick. For I understand that you have been told that when I arrived here and entered the chapel you painted, I am supposed to have said that I would not adopt that manner (of painting). It must be self-evident how
silly that is. I am certain that your judgment is capable of penetrating any and all matters, not to speak of this silly matter; and the greatness of your spirit allows me to be confident that you have little desire to listen to such tales. Nevertheless, I thought I could not refrain from taking the proper steps to eliminate whatever sourness might enter your or other people's feelings toward me. For I tell you herewith, that whoever said that lied in his teeth, and I am ready to challenge in any way whoever says otherwise. And not only that, but also whoever says that I have ever spoken of the chapel other than as something divinely made. Not only of that work, but of you and all your other works - if not as they deserved, at least as much as I was capable. Wherefore I urge you to judge me according to your good spirit, and accept me in your thoughts that way, and not according to those who wish me ill.

I can express but a small part of my sentiments; but with confidence in your good mind, I will stop here. Finally, I beg you to keep me in your good graces, as up to this day, to which I continually commend myself.

From Rome, this 6th day of October 1526, from your very devoted servant,

Rosso Fiorentino
All drawings in the exhibition are by Rosso Fiorentino. All prints, except for the portrait of Rosso Fiorentino (cat. no. 1), were executed after Rosso's compositions by various other artists. Dates in brackets refer to the date the image was composed by Rosso, rather than the date the print was made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalogue Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 §</td>
<td>Portrait of Rosso Fiorentino, woodcut by Cristofano Coriolano, after Giorgio Vasari, 1568 credit: Washington, National Gallery of Art Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Allegory of Death and Fame, engraving by Agostino Veneziano, [1517] credit: London, The British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 §</td>
<td>Standing Nude Woman, red chalk over black chalk, c. 1520 credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Virtue Vanquishing Fortune, red chalk over black chalk, c. 1521 - 1522 credit: Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 §</td>
<td>Seated Male Nude, red chalk, c. 1523 credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 §</td>
<td>Seated Nude Woman, red chalk, 1524 credit: Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Saint Roch Distributing His Inheritance, red chalk, 1524 credit: Paris, Jean-Jacques Lebel Collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 §: 
Fury, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: London, The British Museum

9
Hercules Fighting Cerberus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: London, The British Museum

10
Hercules Shooting Nessus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

11 §
Hercules Killing the Hydra, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

12 §
Hercules Fighting the Centaurs, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland

13
Hercules Overpowering the River Achelous, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: London, The British Museum

14
Hercules Fighting Cacus, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

15
Plate with "Hercules Killing the Hydra," Majolica from the workshop of Guido Durantino, 1535
credit: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

16
Plaque with "Hercules Fighting the Centaurs," enamel in grisaille on copper by Leonard Limosin, 16th century
credit: The Hague, Rijksmuseum

17
Challenge of the Pierides, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1524
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

18
Platter with "The Challenge of the Pierides," Majolica, 16th century
credit: Washington, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

19
Pluto in a Niche, red chalk and red wash over black chalk, 1526
credit: Lyons, Musee des Arts Decoratifs

20
Bacchus in a Niche, red chalk and red wash over black chalk, 1526
credit: Besancon, Musee des Beaux-Arts et d'Archeologie

(more)
21-40 Gods in Niches, 20 engravings by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1526

21 § Saturn
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

22 Ops
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

23 § Jupiter
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

24 Juno
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

25 Neptune
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

26 Thetis
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

27 § Pluto
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

28 Proserpina
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

29 Mars
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

30 Venus
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

31 Apollo
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

32 Diana
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

33 Mercury
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

(more)
34 § Ceres
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

35 Hercules
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

36 Hebe
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

37 Bacchus
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

38 Ariadne
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

39 Vulcan
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

40 § Minerva
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

41 Plaque with the Goddess Ops, enamel in grisaille on copper by Leonard Limosin, 16th century
credit: Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery

42-43 The Loves of the Gods, 2 engravings by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1527

42 Pluto and Proserpina
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

43 Saturn and Philyra
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

44 Dish with "Saturn and Philyra," Majolica attributed to Francesco Durantino, mid-16th century
credit: London, The Victoria and Albert Museum

45 Standing Nude Youth, grey chalk heightened with white, 1527
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre

46 Profile Head of a Young Woman, black chalk, 1527
credit: Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Art Museums

(more)
47 Battle of the Romans and the Sabines, engraving by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, 1527
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

48 Adoration of the Magi, engraving by Cherubino Alberti, [1527]
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

49 Copy of Michelangelo's Apollo, red chalk over traces of black chalk, 1527
credit: New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library

50 Ideal Bust of a Woman, black chalk, 1527
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

51 Reclining Male Nude, pen and ink, 1527
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

52 Stoning of Saint Stephen, engraving by Cherubino Alberti, [1528]
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

53 § Agony in the Garden, engraving by Cherubino Alberti, [1529]
credit: New York, The New York Public Library

54 Standing Apostle, red chalk over black chalk, 1529
credit: London, The British Museum

55 Design for an Altar, pen and ink and wash, heightened with white, over black chalk, 1529
credit: London, The British Museum

56 Altar, engraving by Cherubino Alberti, [1529]
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

57 Mars and Venus, pen and ink, brown wash heightened with white over black chalk, 1530
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre

58 Mars and Venus, anonymous engraving, [1530]
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

59 § Judith with the Head of Holofernes, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1530 - 1531]
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

(more)
60 § ¶ Annunciation, pen and ink and brown wash, heightened with white over black chalk, 1531 or 1532  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

61 Annunciation, anonymous engraving, [1531 or 1532]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

62 § Saint Paul and Saint Peter, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1530 - 1532]  
credit: Florence, Department of Prints and Drawings, Galleria degli Uffizi

63 Saint Jerome, red and black chalks, 1531 - 1532  
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre

64 Narcissus, engraving by Etienne Delaune, [1531 or 1532]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

65 Vertumnus and Pomona, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1532 - mid-1533]  
credit: London, The British Museum

66 Cartouche with Satyrs, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1532 - mid-1533]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

67 Ornamental Panel Illustrating Petrarch's Vision on the Death of Laura, pen and brown ink, grey-brown wash heightened with white, 1534  
credit: Oxford, Christ Church

68 § The Three Fates, Costume Designs, engraving by Pierre Milan, [c. 1534]  
credit: Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art

69 The Three Fates, Costume Designs, engraving by Pierre Milan, [c. 1534] on blue paper  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

70 ¶ Saint Denis (Dionysius the Areopagite) in a Niche, pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white, over black chalk, 1535 or 1536  
credit: Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Kunstbibliothek

71 Cartouche with Nudes, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum

(more)
72 Allegorical Scene of Rage and Madness, anonymous etching, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum

73 Two Groups of Three Putti, anonymous engraving, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

74 The Revenge of the Nauplius, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum

75 The Funeral of Hector, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett

76 The Death of Adonis, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1536]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

77 The Death of Adonis, wool and silk tapestry, [1536]  
credit: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

78 Fame, engraving by Domenico del Barbiere, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

79 The Nymph of Fontainebleau, engraving by Pierre Milan, completed by Rene Boyvin, [1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

80 The Twins of Catania, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: London, The British Museum

81 Caritas Romana, anonymous engraving, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

82 Cleobis and Biton, silk and wool tapestry, [1535 or 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

83 The Royal Elephant, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534]  
credit: London, The British Museum

84 The Rape of Europa, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [c. 1534 - 1536]  
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

(more)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Artwork Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Saturn and Philyra, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [c. 1534 - 1536] credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>The Unity of the State, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534] credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>The Sacrifice, engraving by Etienne Delaune, [c. 1532 - 1534] credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>The Sacrifice, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [late 1536 - 1537] credit: Poughkeepsie, Vassar College Art Gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>The Dance of the Dryads, engraving by Pierre Milan, [c. 1532 - 1534] credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Dish with &quot;The Dance of the Dryads,&quot; enamel attributed to Jean Court, named Vigier, 16th century credit: The Chatsworth House Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>The Enlightenment of Francis I, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1535 or 1536] credit: London, The British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>The Enlightenment of Francis I, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [1535 or 1536] credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Draped Youth Leaning on a Block, anonymous etching, [1535 or 1536] credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Fortune Giving a Drink to a Young Prince, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1532 - 1534] credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Pandora and Her Box, pen and ink and wash over traces of black chalk, c. 1536 credit: Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Seated Male Nude, red chalk, c. 1536 credit: London, The British Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>The Martyrdom of Saints Marcus and Marcellinus, red chalk over black chalk, c. 1537 credit: Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(more)
99 Allegory on the Birth of Christ, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1537]
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

100 Allegory on the Birth of Christ, etching attributed to Master I.O.V., [c. 1537]
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

101 Pieta, etching by Antonio Fantuzzi, [c. 1537]
credit: London, The British Museum

102 Leda and the Swan after Michelangelo, black chalk, c. 1538
credit: London, Royal Academy of Arts

103 Holy Family in a Cartouche, anonymous etching, [c. 1538]
credit: London, The British Museum

104 Apollo Holding a Lyre, pen and grayish ink and wash, 1537 or 1538
credit: Paris, Musee du Louvre

105 The Three Fates, Nude, engraving by Pierre Milan, [1538 - 1540]
credit: London, The British Museum

106 Cephalus and Procris in Two Niches, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1538 - 1540]
credit: Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina

107 Figure Costumed as Hercules, anonymous etching, [1539]
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

108 The Dream of Hercules, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1539]
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

109 Empedocles - Saint Roch, red chalk over traces of black chalk, 1539 or 1540
credit: Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum

110 Empedocles, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1539 or 1540]
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

111 Christ the Redeemer in a Niche, anonymous engraving, [1538 - 1540]
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

112 Design for a Tomb, pen and ink and wash over traces of black chalk, 1539 or 1540
credit: London, The British Museum

(more)
113  Holy Family with Saint Anne, chiaroscuro woodcut in three blocks by Master NDB, [1539 - 1540]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

114  Holy Family with Saint Anne, anonymous engraving, [1539 - 1540]  
credit: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale

115  Madonna and Child with a Book, engraving by Rene Boyvin, [1538 - 1540]  
credit: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

116  Judith and Holofernes, red chalk over traces of black chalk, 1540  
credit: Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

117  The Visitation [?], red chalk, 1540  
credit: Paris, Jean-Jacques Lebel Collection

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